

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /090 W

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R 090534Z JUN 75

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2789

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMCONSUL PERTH

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TAGS PFOR, AS

SUBJ: LABOR PARTY SELECTS NON-ENTITY AS BY-ELECTION CANDIDATE

1. SUMMARY: IN BACKFIRE TO ATTEMPT BY PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM TO INFLUENCE SELECTION OF LABOR PARTY CANDIDATE FOR TASMANIAN BY-ELECTION, STATE ORGANIZATION JUNE 8 CHOSE JOHN MACROSTIE, VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN LAUNCESTON SCHOOL TEACHER, AS CANDIDATE IN BY-ELECTION CAUSED BY RESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF DEFENCE LANCE BARNARD.

2. SECRETARY OF TASMANIAN STATE LABOR PARTY, MRS KATHLEEN VENN, TOLD LABATT 9TH JUNE, RESULTS OF SPECIAL CONFERENCE OF ORGANIZATION WHICH MET IN LAUNCESTON TO SELECT ITS CANDIDATE IN JUNE 28TH
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BY-ELECTION. MRS VENN SAID THAT PARTY CANDIDATE

JOHN MACROSTIE, 34-YEAR OLD BACHELOR SCHOOL TEACHER, WAS SELECTED AFTER DESULTORY MEETING, WHICH WENT THROUGH 3 BALLOTS BEFORE FINAL SELECTION. MRS VENN CHARACTERISED MACROSTIE SELECTION AS "DISASTER". CANDIDATE IS RELATIVELY UNKNOWN OUTSIDE LAUNCESON. HE IS NORMALLY CONSERVATIVE PERSON WHO HAS ATTRACTED LEFT-WING SUPPORT IN PAST PRE-SELECTION CONTESTS IN WHICH HE APPEARED AS "REBEL WITHIN SCHOOL SYSTEM."

3. MRS VENN SAID WHOLE EXERCISE WAS REACTION FROM ATTEMPTS BY PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM TO DICTATE SELECTION OF JIM BRASSIL, MELBOURNE RESIDENT AND CANBHFGQ BASED FIRST SECRETARY TO EX-MINISTER OF DEFENCE, LANCE BARNARD. VOTING WAS SUCCESSFUL EFFORT BY LEFT-WING, WHICH CAME TO LAUNCESTON CONFERENCE WITH STATED PURPOSE OF EMBARRASSING WHITLAM. LEFT-WING SUPPORT FOR MACROSTIE WAS ASSURED BY INTENSE CAMPAIGN BY LEFT-WING TO SECURE MAXIMUM TURNOUT OF DELEGATES WHOM IT CONTROLS AT SUNDAY CONFERENCE. MODERATES REACTED BY STAYING AWAY, IN SPITE OF BEST EFFORTS BY SUCH MODERATE LEADERS AS MRS VENN AND DOUGLAS LOWE. SATURDAY NIGHT, MRS VENN TRIED TO PERSUADE RIGHT-WING TO WITHDRAW BRASSIL AND THROW SUPPORT TO HAWKES, LAUNCESTON RESIDENT AND FAIRLY POPULAR IN DISTRICT. IN EVENT, 47 RIGHT-WING TRADE UNION DELEGATES FAILED TO ATTEND MEETING WHILE ALL 51 LEFT-WING TRADE UNION DELEGATES WERE PRESENT.

4. INITIAL VOTE, WHICH INDICATES COMPOSITION OF CONFERENCE, SHOWS 64 FOR MACROSTIE, 54 FOR BRASSIL, 32 FOR MRS JAMES, 23 FOR HAWKES. IN SECOND BALLOT, VOTES FOR HAWKES AND JAMES PROPONDERENTLY WENT TO MACROSTIE.

5. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUS THAT MODERATE FAILURE TO RALLY DELEGATE STRENGTH ELECTED MACROSTIE. DIS-AFFECTION WITHIN CENTER AND RIGHT-WING IS FURTHER PROOF THAT WHITLAM THEORIES OF CENTRALISM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARE NOT WORKING WITHIN PARTY. TASMANIA IS NOT ONLY INSULAR BUT ISOLATED AND RESENTED CANBERRA EFFORTS TO PUSH VICTORIA CANDIDATE BRAS IL. MRS VENN, WHO IN PAST HAS PROVED TO BE LEVEL-HEADED AND FAITHFUL TO PARTY, IS UNDERSTANDABLY PESSIMISTIC. HER HOPE, EXPRESSED TO LABATT, THAT WHITLAM WILL UNDERSTAND HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIASCO, AND THEREFORE INVOLVE HIMSELF MORE DEEPLY IN ATTEMPT TO ESCALATE

SIMPLE BY-ELECTION INTO CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF
FEDERAL ISSUES, IS PROBABLY WHISTLING IN THE DARK.
CONGEN AND LABATT BELIEVE THAT LABOR ATTEMPTS TO
IGNORE PERSONALITY OF CANDIDATE AND LOCAL ISSUES
WILL FALL ON HARD ROCKS. ONLY HOPES FOR LABOR
ARE IN FAILURE SO OF LIBERALS TO IDENTIFY
LOCAL ISSUES, AND IN FACT THAT LIBERAL CANDIDATE
HAS LESS RELEVANCE TO LAUNCESTON THAN LABOR
CANDIDATE, EX LIEUT COLONEL NEWMAN WHO IS LIBERAL
CANDIDATE, WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO TALK MOSTLY
ABOUT NATIONAL DEFENCE ISSUES, WHILE LABOR
CANDIDATE MACROSTIE CAN BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO
MAKE MUCH OF HIS LONG BUT UN-SUCCESSFUL CAREER
AS LOCAL ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT PROTESTER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NOMINATION, BYELECTION, PARTY MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MELBOU00719
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750200-0368
From: MELBOURNE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750668/aaaackmr.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR PARTY SELECTS NON-ENTITY AS BY-ELECTION CANDIDATE
TAGS: PINT, AS, (MACROSTIE, JOHN), (BARNARD, LANCE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006